

CONCORDIA
LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA
FOUNDATION

INSPIRED BY THE GREAT COMMISSION



The purpose of the CLSO Foundation is to support Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha. This is done by investing and managing donated dollars to fund student scholarships, general school sustainability, and capital expenditures. The current priority for the Foundation is to increase its general endowment to support scholarships and mission advancement.

“THEREFORE GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.” MATTHEW 28:19

Inspired by the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19), my beloved late wife Leona and I developed a philosophy of giving that included five areas of focus: the Great Commission, education, social welfare, the arts, and community efforts. When a ministry embraced the Great Commission, it became a top priority on the list of organizations to support with our financial gifts.

Over the last 20 years, Leona and I have spent time volunteering at Concordia and helping our grandchildren with tuition. We have been blessed to have had five of our grandchildren attend and graduate from Concordia: Kelly Kernen (2005), Jaclyn Kernen (2008), Matthew Kernen and Sara Struble (2015—photos included), and Nathanael Kernen (2017).

We have personally witnessed the Christ-centered education that equips each student to be “Faith Secure, World Ready, Kingdom Leaders” in the church and world. Concordia students are here for more than just the education. They are here for the experience and the faith element of the education program that they receive. We firmly believe that Concordia upholds the biblical verse that states: *“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6). This is what has motivated us to be faithful supporters of the school for so long.

The Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha Foundation, which was established to accept endowment gifts, works in partnership with the Board of Directors and Administration. This partnership is tasked to ensure that no potential student is turned away because a family is unable to pay tuition.

Our gift(s) may be given in several ways. For example, cash will make an impact today, pledges will make an impact tomorrow, and endowments will make an impact forever with earnings on endowment assets of the Foundation sent to the school annually. However you choose to make your contribution(s), all gifts will serve to help a student graduate.

Today, tuition covers only about 65% of the school’s operating costs, which means that our gifts must help make up the other 35% of operating costs that tuition does not cover. Christian education comes with a price tag for teachers, administrators, facilities, equipment, technology, scholarships, and other expenses.

We are all blessed to be called to support the only Lutheran K-12 education system in Omaha. With your help, we can ensure that Concordia is able to continue to send well-prepared students into the world.

Your generosity will make a difference!
Bill Kernen

Why We Choose Concordia

VINCENT AND SHEILA TAYLOR are no strangers to moving and transitioning to new homes and schools for their children, given Vincent's military career. The Taylor's oldest daughter, Briel, started at Concordia as a 5th grader two and half years ago, at that point she had already attended four different schools.

When the Taylor's found out they would be moving to Omaha they spoke with family members who already had students at Concordia. With those positive referrals and Sheila's background of attending Lutheran schools, Concordia was at the top of their list of schools to tour. Once they did an in person tour, the choice to send their children to Concordia was an easy one. Sheila says, "the atmosphere on both campuses is truly something to experience. It is an amazing faith-filled, embracing community where your children grow in a relationship with Christ while receiving a fantastic education."

Given Vincent's career, Sheila made the choice early on to put her career on hold and stay at home to raise their children. They both felt it was important to give their children a stable environment throughout regular and extended absences of Vincent due to deployments and training. This meant that when they came to Omaha and wanted to enroll their children, "scholarship funds were essential." This is the first year that Sheila is able to work as all of their children, Briel, Ryan, Xarion and Aviana are in school full time.

Even with four children and busy work schedules now for both Vincent and Sheila, they make time to serve and volunteer at Concordia. They have both coached sports, run the game clock and managed the game books, worked in concessions, served hot lunch and much more. They both acknowledge that they do have to make sacrifices to send their children to Concordia, but they believe that "investing in a Christian education is pivotal in helping our children develop a deep and lasting relationship with their Heavenly Father."

The Taylors continue to be thankful that they chose Concordia, "this was the smoothest transition into a school we have ever experienced. To know that our children are being nurtured in a Christ-like environment was and is a tremendous blessing. We are humbled by the generosity that makes this Concordia experience possible for our family."



Why We Give

LLOYD AND RUTH PROBASCO

Lloyd and Ruth Probasco have a strong history of support for Lutheran education and, although they have never had a student at Concordia Omaha, they are faithful supporters with gifts of time and treasures.

Ruth started out going to a Lutheran elementary school in Twin Falls, Idaho. Her parents were farmers and would make the 15-mile trip, twice a day over rough roads, to school to ensure Ruth and her siblings received a Christian education. Lloyd's father, who worked on the railroad in Utah, and mother also sacrificed to send their 6 kids to the local

Lutheran school. Lloyd attended Concordia Portland for his last two years of high school, and both Ruth and Lloyd attended Junior College at Concordia Portland. From there they attended Concordia University-Nebraska.

With this firm foundation in Lutheran education they have made the intentional decision to financially support Lutheran schools. They share that they were once told that, "it's hard to give away your money, but it's easy to give away the Lord's money, which he gives to us with his blessings. If we know it all comes from the Lord, it's easy to give it back to Him, it was His to begin with."

Lloyd is a current member of the Concordia Omaha Foundation Board. He first learned about Concordia from former school board President, Pastor David Block who was instrumental in the establishment of the school and Pastor Jim Rasmussen, former Executive Director. Lloyd refers to Martin Luther's words, "For the sake of the church we should train up our children." Ruth believes that Lutheran schools are fulfilling the Great Commission, "We are called to serve in the world, not just talk about it and go to church. Lutheran schools are truly doing what God has instructed."

Alumni Spotlight: Rachel Ehrenberg Ritton



Rachel Ehrenberg Ritton '10 has traveled many miles away from Nebraska since graduation, but she continues to rely on the lessons she learned while at Concordia. After graduation Rachel attended Metro Community College for two years and then transferred to UNO. She earned a B.A. in Psychology and then quickly moved on to a Masters program in Social Work. While taking master level classes Rachel worked as a behavioral technician at Boys Town National Research Center and worked in foster care for almost three years.

Rachel believes that her classes and teachers at Concordia thoroughly prepared her for college and her career. Mrs. Lee's senior level English class that focused on grammar and writing helped her significantly in college. Mr. Master's Business class also made an impact, "this class was full of helpful tools and gave me the foundational business skills I still use," shares Rachel. She also believes her love

for social work started with her Psychology class with Ms. Rosendahl. "The teachers at Concordia made me feel important and that they cared for me. I gained a lot of confidence in myself through the encouragement from those teachers." Rachel is so thankful for the Christian role models that the Concordia teachers provided as well, "I was able to grow in my faith, which helped me stand firm in Christ once I left high school."

Today, Rachel lives in Nairobi, Kenya with her husband, Antony, and two small children, JJ and Amali. Rachel and her husband have both been working for an international Christian school, called Rosslyn Academy, for the last 18 months. Rachel serves as the elementary school counselor. Before this they lived and worked, for two years, on the horn of Africa in Djibouti City, Djibouti.

Memories of time spent with friends are what Rachel counts as a great blessing from her time at Concordia. She was part of the first ever One Act team that went to State and she loved the band trip to Minnesota when the Concordia band performed with another Lutheran high school. Rachel was also part of the praise and worship team that traveled to Washington D.C. and fondly remembers when they prayed and worshipped at the Lincoln Memorial.



CONGRATULATIONS CONCORDIA ACADEMY

U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon School

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U.S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools; schools demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels. The coveted National Blue Ribbon School award affirms the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content. The National Blue Ribbon School flag gracing an entry or flying overhead is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning.

On September 24, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education named Concordia Academy a High-Achieving National Blue Ribbon School. For most schools, this banner of accomplishment is unattainable. A mere 3/10 of 1% of the 185,000 schools in the United States will ever receive this recognition. We congratulate the students, families, staff and Principal Nathan Domsch on receiving this honor.

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LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA
FOUNDATION **WINTER 2021**



*Sign up
for the
annual
gala on
March 5!*



Brandon
Newhouse

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- Mr. Dan Vehle
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- Mr. Steve Gedwillo
- Mr. Aaron Sailer

Meet Brandon Newhouse; Newest Member of the Foundation Board

The Concordia Foundation recently welcomed alumni Brandon Newhouse ('13) as a board member. Brandon is the first alumni to serve on the board and he is looking forward to learning about strategic planning and fundraising with an educational focus.

Brandon is an Omaha native and started attending Concordia as an 8th grader. He was raised in a non-denominational church and was not familiar with the rich tradition and history of Lutheran education. Brandon shares that, "after touring the school and visiting with staff, I fell in love with the smaller class-sizes, Christ-centered education and the intentional community present at Concordia."

Brandon is a graduate of Wheaton College with a degree in Business and Economics. He currently works for Molycop, an international mining manufacturer, as a Senior Treasury Analyst. As the President of the Wheaton Student Managed Investment Fund, he gained experience in planning and executing events, organizational structure and leadership. He is a strong communicator and natural relationship builder.

"I chose to serve on the Concordia Foundation board as a reflection of my appreciation for the experience Concordia granted me though high school," explains Brandon. He looks forward to connecting with other alumni and engaging them in future support of the school and its mission.